UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.17/1995/15
22 March 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Third session
11-28 April 1995
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

GENERAL DISCUSSION ON PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21, FOCUSING ON CROSS-SECTORAL COMPONENTS OF AGENDA 21 AND THE CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Demographic dynamics and sustainability

Report of the Secretary-General

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* E/CN.17/1995/1.

95-07229 (E) 040495 060495

INTRODUCTION

1. The present document reports on progress in the implementation of the aims set out in chapter 5 of Agenda 21 (Demographic dynamics and sustainability) 1/ and presents a set of recommendations for action. The report was prepared by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as task manager for chapter 5 of Agenda 21, in consultation with the United Nations Secretariat, in accordance with arrangements agreed to by the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development at its fourth session. It is the result of consultations and information exchanges between designated focal points in 19 United Nations agencies, governmental officials and a number of other institutions and individuals.

2. The implications for the environment and sustainable development of a rapidly rising world population and other demographic trends, along with consumption and production patterns, have been discussed at international forums for at least two decades. Only in recent years, however, has the international community agreed on a comprehensive series of common objectives and action recommendations for dealing with these issues.

3. A beginning was made with the decisions taken at the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm. At the United Nations population conferences held in 1974 and 1984, recommendations on environment and development issues were included in the outcomes but would not appear to have been given high priority in subsequent years.

4. An important milestone was passed in 1987 with the publication of Our Common Future, 2/ the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, which observed that sustainable development could only be achieved if population size and growth were in harmony with the changing productive potential of the ecosystem.

5. The International Forum on Population in the Twenty-First Century, which in 1989 adopted the Amsterdam Declaration on a Better Life for Future Generations, 3/ acknowledged the inextricable linkages between population, resources and the environment and the need to bring about a sustainable relationship between human numbers, resources and development.

6. The 1990 report of the South Commission 4/ found that current population trends, if not modified, would have negative implications for the South's ability to achieve development and environmental security in the twenty-first century.

7. Finally, in 1992 the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development adopted Agenda 21. Chapter 5 addressed the connections between demographic dynamics and sustainability and provided the most extensive set of recommendations on these issues ever agreed by the international community.

8. The chapter contains three programme areas:

(a) Developing and disseminating knowledge concerning the links between demographic trends and sustainable development;

(b) Formulating integrated national policies for environment and development, taking into account demographic trends and factors;

(c) Implementing integrated environment and development programmes at the local level, taking into account demographic trends and factors.

9. The new salience given to the population/environment/development linkage in chapter 5 of Agenda 21 was carried forward into the Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development, held in September 1994 in Cairo. 5/

10. During preparations for the Conference, a new approach for dealing with population issues evolved, based on the global community's growing appreciation of the linkages between human development, environmental protection and the empowerment of women.

11. According to the Preamble of the Programme of Action, the 1994 conference

> was explicitly given a broader mandate on development issues than previous population conferences, reflecting the growing awareness that population, poverty, patterns of production and consumption and the environment are so closely interconnected that none of them can be considered in isolation. 6/

12. The Programme of Action covers the period until 2015. It reflects the conviction that, to improve people's quality of life and health, developing countries need sustained economic growth within the context of sustainable development, and there must be investments in health and education, especially for girls. The Programme of Action strongly maintains that there can be no sustainable development without the full and equal participation of women in all aspects of development planning and programming. It contains goals and recommendations for the reduction of infant, child and maternal mortality; advances in education; and universal access to reproductive health care, including family planning, by the year 2015. The Programme of Action recognizes that investments in health and education are essential if population stabilization and a balance between population and resources are to be achieved.

13. The Programme of Action is thus about the improvement of the quality of life of all members of the human family. It is about broader choice. It is about better health and better education: it is about strengthening the family as the basic unity of society; and it is about equity and equality for women. It is also about the prospects for sustained and sustainable development and about the sort of future coming generations will inherit.

14. Chapter III of the Programme of Action calls on Governments, with the support of the international community and regional and subregional organizations, to formulate and implement population policies and programmes to support the objectives and actions agreed upon in Agenda 21 and other conferences and other international environmental agreements, taking into account the common but differentiated responsibilities reflected in these

agreements. The chapter has three programme areas: integrating population and development strategies; population, sustained economic growth and poverty; and population and environment.

15. Chapter 5 of Agenda 21 and the Programme of Action together form the most compelling and comprehensive account so far of what needs to be done about the interface between population, environment and sustainable development. The two documents refer to and reinforce each other.

16. In this report, therefore, the activities outlined in the relevant sections of Agenda 21 and the Programme of Action are seen as parts of a continuous process. While Agenda 21 contains the initial statement of intent, the Programme of Action may be seen in part as a reaffirmation and a follow-up to Agenda 21 and a historic breakthrough for the population and development component of sustainable development.

I. GENERAL OVERVIEW

17. The current demographic situation displays a world of considerable disparity at various levels. From the global point of view there are many encouraging signs. After having reached an average annual peak of 2.04 per cent in the years 1965-1970, world population growth declined steadily and is expected to reach a level of 1.57 per cent annually in the years 1990-1995, according to the United Nations median variant. Less encouraging, however, is the seemingly inexorable march of the population momentum which ensures that the number of people being added to the world's population is still rising and is now approaching 90 million annually. The annual increment is not likely to peak before 1998, after which the high number of youth in the developing world will allow it to decline only very slowly for some time to come.

18. At the regional level, the population growth picture becomes more varied (see the table below). After a decline during the first half of the 1980s, the population growth rate of the least developed countries actually increased during the second half of the decade. In some parts of sub-Saharan Africa the rate of growth has never ceased to increase, and at present growth levels the population of some of those countries (which are among the poorest) will double in about 20 years. In Central and South America the growth rate has decreased steadily as it did in the Caribbean until the mid-1970s, after which it began to increase (albeit very slowly). With one or two exceptions, however, all regions and subregions of the world are projected to have a declining growth rate in the future. Many industrialized countries are already experiencing negative growth rates and are expected to continue to do so.

Table. Annual rate of population growth, by region

(Percentage, medium variant)

Major area and region	1970-1975	1975-1980	1980-1985	1985-1990	1990-1995	1995-2000	2000-2005	2005-2010	2010-2015
World total	1.96	1.73	1.73	1.73	1.57	1.49	1.37	1.29	1.20
More developed regions	0.81	0.67	0.56	0.58	0.40	0.32	0.25	0.21	0.18
Less developed regions	2.37	2.08	2.09	2.06	1.88	1.78	1.63	1.52	1.41
Least developed regions	2.47	2.57	2.44	2.55	2.82	2.74	2.52	.40	2.28
Africa	2.56	2.78	2.86	2.84	2.81	2.66	2.56	2.47	2.37
Asia	2.27	1.87	1.89	1.86	1.64	1.55	1.38	1.26	1.15
Europe	0.60	0.49	0.38	0.43	0.15	0.08	0.00	-0.03	-0.06
Latin America	2.44	2.28	2.11	1.97	1.84	1.67	1.50	1.34	1.20
North America	1.10	1.07	0.93	0.98	1.05	0.90	0.81	0.78	0.78
Oceania	2.09	1.13	1.50	1.55	1.54	1.42	1.31	1.24	1.18

Source: World Population Prospects: 1994 Revision (United Nations publication forthcoming).

19. The Programme of Action indicates that we have a choice as to how many people will inhabit the earth in the decades ahead. The choice is essentially between a world population in the year 2015 of 7.1 billion or of 7.8 billion, or somewhere in between. The difference between the high and the low projections for the year 2015 is 720 million, which is approximately the present population of Africa. In the year 2050 the difference between the high (11.9 billion) and the low (7.9 billion) projections is a staggering 4 billion, which is about 70 per cent of the present world population, whose impact on the environment is already causing great concern.

20. In many parts of the developing world, where people are facing the most difficult problems, considerable improvement has taken place during the past 25 years. Fertility levels and crude death rates have declined, and life expectancy at birth has increased by nearly 20 per cent, from 52 years in 1969 to 62 years today. Overall, the health of women and children is improving, and contraceptive prevalence has increased from around 14 per cent in 1960-1965 to around 57 per cent of women of reproductive age in 1994.

21. Considerable progress has been made in reducing both mortality and fertility rates. Mortality rates have improved in nearly all parts of the world, especially in Northern Africa, Western Asia and South America, where infant mortality rates were reduced by more than half. Mortality indicators show, however, that the gap between industrialized and developing countries has

widened during the past two decades. And in some areas of the developing world the positive trend of the 1970s has slowed and was even reversed in the 1980s, as the effects of the economic recession, the debt crisis, and structural adjustment programmes began to be felt.

22. In the developing countries the total fertility rate decreased from about 5.8 in the early 1970s to about 3.6 in the early 1990s. The greatest reduction has taken place in East and South-east Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, and the least has occurred in sub-Saharan Africa, where in some countries the fertility rate has actually risen.

23. Few measures are more important to the success of population and development policies than those aimed at the emancipation and empowerment of women. Although progress has been made, various obstacles have combined to defeat the initiatives aimed at improving the status of women. They include certain traditional norms, low literacy rates and educational attainment among girls and women, low priority given to women's issues by policy and decision makers, and the relative weakness of institutions formed to advance the causes of women.

24. Most reports emphasized the erosion of the traditional family unit. Fewer marriages, increasing divorce rates, and rising numbers of female-headed households were mentioned in a large number of reports from all parts of the world. Changes to and the gradual erosion of traditional family structures and practices caused many developing countries to express concern over the number of elderly people who find themselves without care.

25. Migratory movements were mentioned in almost all national reports. The magnitude of international migration and of rural-to-urban and other forms of internal migration has reached unprecedented proportions. A highly visible trend recorded in almost all developing countries is the massive migration to one or two major cities. The reports identify five major causes of increasing urbanization, all of which are about the search for better living conditions: rural unemployment and underemployment; poor rural social services; lack of arable land; natural disasters, particularly drought; and civil unrest.

26. The reports collectively suggest that population policies and programmes contribute a great deal to socio-economic development and environmental preservation. They also confirm that a range of complementary sustainable development initiatives might greatly enhance the implementation of population programmes. The growing recognition of these symbiotic relationships is being gradually translated into policies, plans and programmes.

27. The integration of population concerns into environmental and sustainable development planning nevertheless poses some special challenges. Some of these relate to the planning process itself such as lack of clear lines of responsibility and lack of focus in the national development plan. Others include the difficulty involved in doing what to many is something entirely new - namely, integrating cross-sectoral issues into a sectorally based and structured planning system. Yet others stem from lack of data and trained staff.

28. In general the reports indicate that the developing countries in particular experience considerable difficulties in integrating population concerns into their development and environment planning. Resource constraints and institutional limitations quite clearly set limits to what can be achieved during any given period of time. Awareness of the links between population and sustainable development, however, is clearly growing in both the public and private sectors.

II. REVIEW OF PROGRESS

A. Country experiences

29. Nearly all of the countries that submitted national reports on the implementation of Agenda 21 referred to their national reports to the International Conference on Population and Development, in which they had discussed their implementation of chapter 5 of Agenda 21. The overview provided here and the accounts of activities at the national level therefore draw extensively on the national reports prepared for that Conference.

30. Of the 168 countries that submitted reports to the secretariat of the International Conference on Population and Development, 125 were from developing and 43 from industrialized countries.

31. The national reports contain little information about concrete activities and projects aimed at further exploration and greater clarification of the intricate relationships between demographic factors, sustainable development and the environment. They do provide, however, information about institutional developments and general policies and attitudes.

1. Developing countries

32. The accomplishments of the past two decades are the result of many factors, not the least of which is a pronounced change by many Governments from indifference to committed endorsement of population activities and policies. This has been given concrete expression in the formation, where none existed before, of central governmental institutions charged with the implementation of comprehensive population policies and programmes. As many as 98 per cent of the developing countries reported the existence of such institutions, of which 77 per cent dealt exclusively with population issues, either through a national population ccuncil or a ministry.

33. More attention is being paid to the need for integrating population concerns into national planning systems. Although in the past many countries included population variables in their five-year development plans, the reports reveal that the steps taken to integrate population issues into other levels of planning are of relatively recent origin in many countries.

34. Of the reports which addressed the issue, 94 per cent stated that population concerns were incorporated into the overall development plan of their respective countries. In the great majority of cases, however, the population

dimension was treated in very general terms. Only 17 per cent of the reports made clear that population was integrated in the sectoral planning processes, and only 8 per cent indicated that population issues had made it into local-level planning.

35. Several countries (for example, India and Argentina) have decentralized their planning systems to such an extent that population plans are almost entirely the prerogative of local administrations. Other countries have decentralized various elements of their population programmes.

36. Many countries indicated that, despite having a planning apparatus that facilitates the integration of population concerns into national planning, there is lack of functional integration. This is mainly attributed to lack of data and insufficient analysis of existing data, lack of satisfactory methodology for integration, lack of a critical mass of technical staff and of staff commitment among the line ministries and departments to carry out the tasks necessary for integration, and lack of resources. Of these, weaknesses in data collection, analysis and research capacity were particularly stressed.

37. The attention currently paid to the relationship between population and development sprang from a realization in many countries that population growth is outpacing socio-economic development and that a balance between the two has to be found. Low levels and rates of technological progress, combined with rapid population growth, have been placing severe strains on social and economic institutions and the carrying capacity of the natural environment.

38. The most frequently reported relationship (noted in 75 per cent of the reports) is between population growth and general socio-economic development, which includes rate of economic growth, general living standards, and equity. In several cases population growth and the attendant demands for social services, dwellings etc. exceed economic growth by a wide margin. In the national report of Lesotho, for example, it is stated that per capita income is likely to decrease significantly as a result of population growth because even if the Government succeeds in raising investment levels to generate more income and savings, the net effect will be overtaken by the sheer growth in the number of people requiring social and other services.

39. The linkage between population growth and social services was of concern to 63 per cent of the developing countries. Two African countries illustrate the concern expressed by many. In Botswana, population growth in the years 1971-1991 led to a doubling of primary school enrolment, straining the national education budget to its limits. In Burundi half-time schooling was introduced to cope with the growing demand for basic education.

40. The third most frequently mentioned issue, referred to in 57 per cent of the reports, was the linkage between population growth and natural resources/land use. The loss of arable land stood out as perhaps the most serious concern. Thus, in Lesotho between 1976 and 1994 arable land was reduced from 13 per cent to 9 per cent of total land. High population growth and more than a doubling of the population density (from 306 to 743 persons per square km) led to a drastic conversion of farmland into human settlements. Overgrazing and soil erosion also contributed to the loss of arable land.

41. The report from China provided another drastic example: rapid population growth had led to a continuous decrease in the per capita share of arable land. One third of the country's arable land was affected by soil erosion, with a loss of 5 billion tons of top soil every year.

42. Two types of links involving the environment are particularly stressed in the national reports. The first is that between production and the environment; the second is that between urban migration/population density and the environment. In 86 per cent of the reports from the developing countries, production and the environment were singled out. Production was usually cited as the cause of the depletion and/or degradation of natural resources and the pollution of land, water, and air. Both agricultural and industrial processes were included. In the report of the Philippines, urban industrial processing was blamed for the pollution of water and air.

43. The linkage between urban migration/population density and the environment was mentioned in 73 per cent of the reports. Very rarely was population density mentioned apart from urbanization, which suggests that in many cases population density is equated with urbanization. Some of the effects of urbanization on the environment were destruction of natural resources, pollution of adjacent rivers, and air and water pollution. The report of Bangladesh stated that the rapid increase in urban population was due mainly to the heavy flow of rural migrants to urban areas in search of work and the inability of the rural areas to absorb and sustain further population increase. The physical amenities of urban areas - e.g., sewerage, water supply, transportation, sanitation - were unable to cope with the large influx of population. Most of the urban and suburban areas were thus exposed to heavy pollution.

44. In 41 per cent of the reports reference was made to the link between population growth and its effects on the environment. According to the Nigerian report, the country's high population growth rate was leading to tolerable levels of the extraction of natural resources at an unacceptable level, thus defeating attempts to achieve sustainability.

45. Although the national reports reveal that many aspects of the links between population and development are not well understood, there was widespread agreement that population policies and programmes can have beneficial effects on development. Similarly, the reports generally recognize that population interventions will be more successful if they are complemented by a range of development policies and programmes. Many reports noted, for example, that investments in primary health care and improvements in the status and condition of women could have significant impact on total fertility rates. A large number of reports cited the results of research on the impact of female education on fertility rates.

46. Links between population and development are also perceived in terms of the overall cost of development initiatives. Certain low-income countries are beginning to look on population initiatives as cost-efficient means of promoting development. In the view of quite a few countries, the savings that resulted from population interventions were considered substantial because of their comparatively low cost.

47. Pollution of land, air and water, especially from production processes; soil erosion and land degradation; loss of biodiversity; and deforestation emerged from the reports as the most salient problems. Resolving them will require a better balance between population growth and distribution and the natural carrying capacity of the land.

2. Developed countries

48. Having completed the demographic transition, the developed countries are less concerned by overall population growth rates than by the age structure of their populations. Thus the relationship between ageing and social expenditures was mentioned in 79 per cent of the reports filed by 24 country members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). According to the report of Japan, for example, the portion of its population aged above 65 years had increased from 5 per cent in 1950 to 12 per cent in 1990 and was expected to increase to 26 per cent by the year 2025.

49. Another prominent issue in many developed countries is the relationship between family policy, women in the workforce and fertility trends. The Austrian report provides a good example of the problems involved. As in many other developed countries, the fertility rate in Austria is below replacement level, and the decline in the rate is seen in part as being due to the increasing number of women who have joined the work force. The Government thus introduced policies meant to help women combine careers with raising families and distribute the burdens of house-keeping and child-raising more equitably between the sexes. Other developed countries have introduced similar policies.

50. Half of the reports from OECD countries mention the relationship between immigration and social unrest. Only a third referred to the relationship between environment and lifestyles/behaviour.

51. The link between production and environment was cited in 55 per cent of the reports. Although consumption is presumably part of this set of issues, only 25 per cent of reports referred to consumption as such. The report of Australia made the point that small populations with high consumption levels may have a greater impact on the environment than large populations with low consumption levels. The report of Germany argued that major responsibility for reducing global environmental damage lies with the developed countries, mainly because of their high rates of production and consumption.

52. The links between urban migration/population density and the environment were also mentioned in 55 per cent of the reports. The points made were much the same as those made by the developing countries - namely, that urbanization gives rise to waste disposal problems and pollution of various kinds and removes prime arable land from agricultural production.

3. Countries with economies in transition

53. Some of the concerns identified by the developed countries were shared by the countries with economies in transition - for example, the linkage between population ageing and social expenditures and the linkage between family policy, women in the workforce and fertility trends.

54. Two other linkages, reflecting the difficult economic changes taking place in these countries, were mentioned by 86 per cent of them: the links between economic performance and the well-being of the population, and between economic performance, employment opportunities and migration patterns.

55. The relationship between environmental degradation and public health also figured prominently. The report of Russia, for example, referred to the effects of industrial contamination of the environment on paediatric mortality and morbidity (especially childhood asthma). The reports of both Poland and Russia saw the health of their industrial workers as a function of levels of industrial pollution.

B. Major groups and non-governmental organizations

56. The recognition the non-governmental organization community received for its contributions to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development process was translated into active and well organized participation in the preparatory process for the International Conference on Population and Development. Non-governmental organizations took part in all the sessions of the Preparatory Committee and in regional preparatory meetings. An NGO Planning Committee and its operating arm, the NGO Planning Committee Secretariat, arranged and facilitated the participation of non-governmental organizations in Cairo. Funding for these organizational activities was obtained from Governments, foundations, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations themselves. The number of non-governmental organization representatives on national delegations was higher than at any past United Nations conference. A total of 1,254, of which 153 were in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, received accreditation from the United Nations to participate in the official proceedings, and more than 4,200 participants from 138 countries partook in Forum activities.

57. The Programme of Action in no small measure owes its overall advances to the determined efforts and influence of the non-governmental organizations. Women's health organizations were especially active in lobbying for a broader definition of reproductive health and measures aimed at the empowerment of women.

58. A rough division according to category of non-governmental organizations present in Cairo reveals that some 87 were environmental and some 320 were development. Others were more or less purely concerned with population, women, youth. These numbers indicate a solid increase in non-governmental organizations that include demographic factors in their activities, although their main focus is not on population.

59. In both developing and industrialized countries, many of these non-governmental organizations have significant programmes and projects in the field of population, environment and sustainable development. Suffice it to mention institutions such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, the Environmental Defense Fund ... A more extensive account of the activities of non-governmental organizations in the field of population, environment, and sustainable development will be presented in the report on chapter 5 to the next session of the Commission.

III. FINANCE AND TECHNOLOGY

60. The delegations at the Conference reached a general consensus on the resources needed for an integrated programme for population and reproductive health - one that includes family planning and other reproductive health services, measures for preventing sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and AIDS, and population data, policy and research. Agreement was possible because the methods that generated the estimates were extensively reviewed by experts at the Preparatory Committee and inter-sessional meetings leading up to the Conference. This process resulted in resource projections significantly more advanced than those discussed in earlier international forums.

61. The Programme of Action estimates that about $17 billion will be required in the year 2000 from all sources - Governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and the international community. This amount increases annually, reaching $21.7 billion by the year 2015.

62. These estimates suggest that globally about two thirds of the resources required in the developing countries will still come from national sources. They also suggest that by the year 2000 the annual support to population and reproductive health programmes by the international community needed to address national needs will be about $5.7 billion, rising in steps to about $7.2 billion in 2015. This compares to the present level of about $1 billion each to family planning and to other reproductive health programmes.

63. The magnitude and the rate of increase of the resources required vary substantially between and within different subregions of the world. The annual amount needed will have to increase rapidly in order to avoid delays in implementation, which would lead to higher costs later.

64. The greatest proportional increases in resources, both in the near term and over the next 20 years, will be needed in sub-Saharan Africa. It is there that the greatest investments in the development of vital institutional infrastructure will be required and where the constraints on domestic resources are most severe. External assistance to sub-Saharan African programmes will need to reach nearly $1.8 billion per year in the year 2000, as compared to roughly $200 million-$250 million per year in the early 1990s. Alone among the world subregions, the total annual resources required for sub-Saharan African programmes will nearly double between the year 2000 and the year 2015.

65. In the year 2000 it is estimated that the external assistance required in the Asia and Pacific region will exceed $2.9 billion and that external assistance requirements during the period 2000-2015 will remain fairly level, at about $2.8 billion-$2.9 billion per annum.

66. In the Latin American region the needs for external resources between 2000 and 2015 are expected to remain stable at the level of roughly $500 million a year, which is a much smaller share of total resources than in the case of Africa.

67. Levels of external assistance similar to those for Latin America will also be required in North Africa and Western Asia between 2000 and 2015.

68. External assistance to countries with economies in transition in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union will be necessary in order to stop and reverse the present deterioration of the primary health service infrastructure so as to facilitate the transformation of their programmes for population and reproductive health into ones that include quality family-planning information and services.

69. These resource estimates do not include the cost of implementing some of the specific goals included in the Programme of Action, such as primary education for all and reducing maternal and child mortality rates.

70. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has assigned to the Executive Director of UNFPA the task of coordinating consultations with various bodies of the United Nations system, the international financial institutions and various bilateral aid organizations and agencies. This involves promoting an exchange of information on the requirements for international assistance; regularly reviewing the specific needs of countries in the field of population, including emergency and temporary needs; and maximizing the availability of resources and their effective utilization.

IV. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

71. A majority of the organizations that provided information on their activities have undertaken efforts in one or more of the three programme areas. In some cases strategic frameworks to address the population and environment issues have been adopted, in response to one of the two Conferences. Prior to the International Conference, regional population conferences were convened in all major regions. The agendas and declarations emanating from them reflect the variety of particular regional circumstances, issues and problems. They all, however, emphasize the need to adopt an integrated approach to population and sustainability issues, incorporating population concerns into environmental and sustainable development planning.

Programme area A. Developing and disseminating knowledge concerning the linkages between demographic trends and factors and sustainable development

72. Organized by ESCAP and the Conference secretariat, the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, with the central theme of "Population and sustainable development: goals and strategies into the twenty-first century", noted that understanding the interdependence between people, their development activities and the environment was of crucial importance. The Conference adopted the Bali Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development 7/ which emphasizes the crucial role of population factors in environmental balance and the paramount need fully to incorporate population concerns into strategies to achieve sustainable development.

73. A similar message was conveyed by the South Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Population and Sustainable Development. The Port Vila Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development 8/ noted the differing circumstances of the island States but none the less emphasized that all countries and territories shared a strong affinity with and dependence on land and ocean resources for their livelihood. Those resources were coming under increasing pressure due to continuing population growth, expanding economic activity and natural disasters.

74. ECLAC convened the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference on Population and Development. The consensus 9/ adopted by the Conference views environmental degradation as having many causes, including irrational development patterns, inappropriate technologies and consumption patterns, mainly among industrialized countries and privileged minorities in developing countries, and worsening standards of living for vast sectors of the population. The declaration points to fragile ecosystems in rural areas as particularly endangered by rapid expansion of human settlements.

75. The Declaration adopted by the Andean Meeting on Population and Development 10/ makes similar observations.

76. A conference organized by ESCWA issued the Second Amman Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development. 11/ The main issues considered by the European Population Conference, organized by ECE, were population growth, age structure and international migration.

77. As part of the preparation for the Conference, the Third African Population Conference adopted the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development. 12/ It includes a call for African nations to accelerate the implementation of the Kilimanjaro Programme of Action for African Population and Self-reliant Development. 13/ Earlier the Economic Commission for Africa had developed a strategic framework of action with the stated objective of enabling African countries to address the problem of eradicating poverty through sound environmental management for sustainable development. Among the strategic areas identified were managing demographic change and pressures, achieving food self-sufficiency and food security and ensuring efficient and equitable use of water resources.

78. A number of publications were prepared by individual organizations prior to the Conference. The Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE), located within ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), submitted a paper on population, social equity and changing production patterns to the regional conference. Further publications covering the topics of urbanization and its environmental repercussions and the environmental sustainability of the great cities of Latin America were also prepared by CELADE.

79. Extensive programmatic review and consultation were undertaken by WHO in order to examine the relationship between population dynamics and health and, in view of that relationship, the appropriate responses required from the health sector. A WHO position paper provided the starting-point for a reorientation of the health sector to the issues of population.

80. Databases providing demographic information have been updated or modified to accommodate the needs posed by the implementation of chapter 5. Throughout the United Nations system, considerable effort has been put into developing methodologies and analytical tools for better understanding the interactions of population and environment variables.

81. The Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat, with funding from UNFPA, has carried out a project aimed at investigating the current state of knowledge regarding the relationships between population and the environment in developing countries. It has prepared a draft report containing a bibliography, a literature survey of current research, and a proposed research agenda on critical aspects of those relationships. A report by the Division on governmental views of the relationship between population and the environment is being completed.

82. In 1994 UNESCO launched an interdisciplinary and inter-agency project on environment and population education and information for human development. The project seeks to refine the knowledge base and develop action frameworks to strengthen, in the various regions, education training and information activities dealing in an integrated manner with the environment and population issues; to foster the development of reoriented education, training and information programmes and materials; and to mobilize the support of decision makers and opinion leaders at the international, regional and national levels. Pilot projects to develop population and environment educational materials and technical support for the development or reshaping of national education or training programmes are being designed.

83. FAO has undertaken a number of activities, including an informal round table of experts on women, population and the environment in South-East Asia; a review of population/environment issues and concepts for population programme staff; and the organization of a conference in the Netherlands on agriculture and the environment. The conference will attempt to improve the understanding of the implications of sustainability for the agricultural sector and reach a consensus on the actions needed, including a review of population issues. With UNFPA assistance, FAO provides advisory services on population and environment, in particular for programme and project formulation and implementation.

84. ESCAP's population information programme on improved processing, management, communication and dissemination of population data and information involves the following principal activities: supplying direct technical assistance and cost-sharing in infrastructural development to national population information (POPIN) centres and networks in the region, in order to help them acquire, analyse, process and disseminate technical information and data in support of population policy formulation, planning, research and programme implementation at the national level; promoting technical cooperation among national POPIN centres and networks through the exchange of personnel, training, study visits etc.; establishing subregional population information networks and undertaking special activities with networks in other closely related fields, such as health, education, agriculture and environment; providing improved support to Governments in the acquisition, analysis, dissemination and utilization of population data and information, through the establishment of a POPIN data bank; producing and disseminating population information repackaged to meet the identified interests of various users; and increasing awareness of population issues and appreciation of their importance to national development through conferences, exhibitions, publications etc.

85. Regarding human settlements, UNCHS (Habitat) has in the years since the Conference continued to develop programmes focusing on urbanization and its impact on population dynamics - fertility trends, mortality trends, migration trends, trends in family size and environmental trends. Research is being undertaken by the Centre on these subjects and on policies and strategies related to urbanization and development issues, national urbanization, urban development policies, and strategies with special reference to relationships between human settlements and sustainable development. In a document UNCHS prepared for the Conference, on population, urbanization and quality of life, it underlined the positive effects of urbanization on social change and modernization, on fertility, mortality and other demographic trends, on personal and household income levels and on the general economic development of both the rural and urban areas.

86. Since the Conference UNFPA has undertaken and provided support for a number of initiatives aimed at exploring the relationship between population, sustainable development and the environment. These initiatives vary considerably in scope and focus. They are all, however, aimed at providing interdisciplinary perspectives and finding cross-sectoral solutions to such issues. The Fund has, inter alia, supported projects looking at such diverse topics as poverty, gender, consumption patterns and environmental refugees in the context of population, environment and sustainable development. In the field of population and sustainable development, the Fund has engaged in particularly close cooperation with ILO, FAO, the Population Division of the Secretariat and the regional economic commissions. Also, it has provided support for projects and programmes initiated by non-governmental organizations and academic and research institutions, both in the developing and the developed countries.

Programme area B. Formulating integrated national policies for environment and development, taking into account demographic trends and factors

87. Central to the integration of population concern in sustainable development policy formulation is the provision of reliable and timely information relevant to population and environment decision-making. Establishing indigenous capacity in this area is therefore of vital importance. Capacity-building exercises include ECA support for, inter alia, training at the Regional Centre for Services in Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing and the Regional Centre in Training in Aerospace Surveying. ECLAC supports two postgraduate courses annually for professionals in population and development. Several of the modules in the courses deal specifically with various aspects of demographics and the environment and sustainable development.

88. The regional commissions already maintain regional population databases or networks. The regional population database for Latin America and the Caribbean, DOCPAL, constitutes a bibliographical source for information, providing a number of services, including access to national databases on CD-ROM. The scope of DOCPAL is being expanded to compare population and environmental information.

89. The UNESCO/UNEP International Environmental Education Programme, in keeping with the recommendations of Agenda 21, has oriented its goals and actions world wide, incorporating population as an important component of environmental education. The aim is to contribute more effectively to improving the quality of life as well as the quality of environment. Activities include distribution of documents and materials on environmental education which also contain information on population, and disseminating the quarterly newsletter Connect.

90. UNESCO, with UNFPA support, expanded its population education programmes to more levels of the education system, including non-formal education. Activities include development of methodologies and the design and elaboration of prototype teaching/learning material.

91. UNCHS provides a range of information services. Through its City Data Programme and Human Settlements Statistical Database Programme, it is developing, collating and analysing data on population, households, gender, housing, infrastructure services and environment. The programmes aim at building and strengthening national databases on demographic and human settlements factors and trends. The work is being carried out in collaboration with the Network on Urban Research in the European Community, the International Statistical Institute, the International Union of Local Authorities and the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat. It includes the collection of statistics on large cities - that is, all cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants.

92. A number of computer-aided tools are being developed to integrate population and environment information. CELADE is developing a microcomputer-based tool to help integrate population information into account geography. The project, "R+GIS Generic Population-related Application Tools", can combine population data with data for spatial display to provide alternative scenarios or illustrate the implications of various assumptions for policy makers. Four

different tools will be developed for various user groups. They should help local authorities to make knowledgeable decisions and non-governmental organizations and others outside government to make more informed proposals and suggestions for the improvements of official programmes.

93. Similarly, in 1993 the Population Division issued version 2.0 of the Database for Population and Research (PRED Bank). The focus of PRED Bank 2.0 is the interrelationship between population pressure and land use in rural areas. PRED Bank 2.0 was designed as part of the Integrated Software Package for Geographical Information, Maps and Graphics (POPMAP), an information system for microcomputers which combines database, spreadsheet and geographical mapping facilities. PRED Bank 2.0 contains national data on approximately 70 relevant variables for the period 1961-1989 for more than 100 developing countries. It is currently available in diskette form with a user's guide. A report entitled "Population pressure, land use and environment: national trends" is being completed and will be published in 1995.

94. All the organizations providing information for the present report have undertaken activities exploring, from different perspectives, the gender implications of sustainable development relevant to chapter 5. ESCWA focused on return migration in its studies of Jordanian and Yemeni returnees; it also conducted a study on family and women returnees.

95. UNFPA currently provides Governments with technical assistance in all the sectors of population policy, including institutional capacity-building, training of key personnel, support for the provision of population data and information on the linkages between population, environment, and sustainable development.

96. Facilitating the integration of environment and population concerns into development planning constitutes one of the objectives of the UNFPA Global Programme of Training in Population and Development. The focus is on developing national capacity to address the interdisciplinary nature of development. The five institutions at which training is taking place are or soon will be located in developing countries.

97. It would be helpful if the operational organizations of the United Nations system whose mandates relate to chapter 5 of Agenda 21 or chapter 3 of the Cairo Programme of Action would formulate harmonized guidelines and specific instructions for their respective field offices on implementation of the chapters. Such guidelines might be used in the country strategy notes for the coordination of project/programme activities and for joint programming.

Programme area C. Implementing integrated environment and development programmes at the local level, taking into account demographic trends and factors

98. In this programme area close cooperation between institutional partners in the United Nations system and the importance of establishing new partnerships or strengthening existing ones with governmental and non-governmental organizations, particularly grass-roots movements, in order to ensure maximum effectiveness in promoting sustainable development, were emphasized. Utilizing

the complementarity of the United Nations system and fostering cross-sectoral initiatives are considered key elements of integrated programmes.

99. ESCAP's positive experiences with local-level initiatives illustrate this point. ESCAP maintains that family-planning programmes at the local level, undertaken by community-based and non-governmental organizations, have been successful in realizing their targets. In fact such local-level agencies have emerged as a new locus of economic and social growth, providing innovative institutional arrangements through which family planning, health, education and income-generating activities can be integrated at the local level, ensuring environmentally sensitive sustainable development on a limited scale. They have the potential not only to revolutionize the delivery of reproductive health services but also to combat land degradation, promote community forestry, and in general, bring about significant improvements in living conditions for the local target populations.

100. A project using population data for local-area development planning in the countries of the ESCAP region, currently under implementation, is concerned with the analysis of the 1990 round of census data. It aims to estimate levels and trends of fertility by local area and, in the process, determine the underlying socio-economic and cultural context of success and failure in family-planning policies; analyse local-level patterns of fertility, infant/child mortality and migration vis-à-vis socio-economic characteristics and environmental variables; address the gender issue; and identify microlevel determinants of programme successes.

101. WHO is providing technical support to various countries to carry out health research (biomedical, epidemiological, social and operational) for improving the implementation of their reproductive health programmes. Particular emphasis is being given to socio-behavioural research and operations research on cost-effective integration and delivery of the elements of reproductive health care.

102. The UNCHS Community Development Programme has existed for nearly 10 years. It undertakes a wide range of activities in the seven partner countries (Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Uganda and Zambia) and at the global level to promote and support capacity- and institution-building in low-income urban and rural communities. The empowerment of community members and leaders to become the motivators of sustainable local development is one of the most essential means of poverty reduction in the long term. The Programme draws on Habitat's experience in participatory approaches to human development and community-based practical experience in improving human settlements. The Programme is planning to expand its activities in the developing countries so as to contribute to the improvement of the living and working conditions of low-income communities and thereby reduce their poverty.

103. The Women and Human Settlements Development Programme of UNCHS aims to ensure that all of the programmes, projects and activities of UNCHS clearly reflect gender considerations. The developmental goal is building gender awareness by introducing a process of planning, monitoring and evaluating gender components into the Centre's programmes, projects, and activities. The approach has been one of advising and training UNCHS staff, both at headquarters and in the field, to analyse projects and activities in gender-aware contexts. The

Programme is working with other key programmes of the Centre, such as the Community Participation Training Programme, the Urban Indicators Project, the Solid Waste Management Programme, and the Environmental Health and Sanitation Programme, effectively to integrate a gender perspective into programme activities in the field.

104. The Women and Human Settlements Development Programme sees the following as the key issues regarding women, environment, urbanization and human settlements development: increasing the participation of women in the design, development and implementation of policies and programmes for the sustainable development of human settlements, including increasing the proportion of women among decision makers; developing the capacity of women's organizations to participate actively in the sustainable development of human settlements; providing social facilities, environmental infrastructure and technologies that will reduce the workload of women and enhance their environmentally sound behaviour; and facilitating women's access to land and other natural resources. The Programme is currently active in major regions of Africa and Latin America. Significant progress has been made in increasing awareness of the need to integrate women into development activities in those areas.

105. UNFPA is involved in a number of new initiatives which have the potential to help bring about demographic patterns that are compatible with sustainable development. The Partners in Population and Development Initiative, launched at the Conference in Cairo, is aimed at building and strengthening technical cooperation among developing countries. The initiative was established under the leadership of Indonesia, and its major objectives are to promote the idea of South/South collaboration, share experiences, and undertake fund-raising. The member countries have successfully pursued population policies and have, or are undergoing, a demographic transition to more sustainable population growth.

106. According to a recent report of the Executive Director of UNFPA,

> The scope of activities in the area of population and sustainable development policy should be broadened and linked with efforts in the areas of health, education, family planning, the condition of women, poverty alleviation and the environment - the aim being to make population policy truly an integral part of all other efforts towards sustainable development. This will require support for data collection and analysis, relevant socio-cultural and operations research, the creation and maintenance of relevant databases and support for policy formulation. 14/

107. The many projects and programmes referred to above do not provide an exhaustive account of the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations. The World Bank's substantial lending to population programmes, for example, is not included.

108. The picture that emerges, however, gives ample reason to believe that in the field of population, environment and sustainable development there is considerable need - and many opportunities - for coordination and collaboration.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

A. Conclusions

109. The general awareness of the importance of demographic trends and factors to environmental and developmental sustainability has increased gradually over the past few decades. The adoption of Agenda 21 did more than any other event to bring the issues to the fore. Since then, the number of people who came to recognize the significance of the issues further increased and reached its peak as a result of the Cairo Conference in September 1994. The Programme of Action of that Conference is, on the one hand, a measure of where the world stands on major demographic issues and, on the other, a measure of how much remains to be done in the field of population, environment and sustainable development.

B. Proposals for action

110. The Commission on Sustainable Development might wish to:

(a) Urge Governments to implement the goals and recommendations of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, with special reference to chapter III, in view of the Conference's mandate in this area;

(b) Recommend to Governments that they allocate to appropriate institutions, both public and private, national and international, sufficient resources for further examining the relationship between population, environment and sustainable development in order to improve the quality of planning and policy formulation;

(c) Recommend to Governments that they reinforce their efforts at institution-building in the field of population and population policies with a view to prompt integration of population concerns into environmental and sustainable development planning and policies;

(d) Recommend to the respective bureaux of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Commission on Population and Development that they explore the feasibility of holding joint meetings with a view to examining issues with a bearing on the implementation of chapter 5 of Agenda 21 and chapter III of the Programme of Action;

(e) Encourage major groups working in the population/gender field and in other sustainable development fields to increase their communication, cooperation and coordination at the local, regional and international levels in order to reinforce their contribution to the mutual understanding of these issues and to facilitate their active participation in the implementation of chapter 5 of Agenda 21 and chapter III of the Programme of Action;

(f) Recommend that UNFPA, with the assistance of UNEP, UNDP and other relevant institutions, explore the possibility of submitting to the Commission a periodic report on populations at risk owing to the cumulative effects of local environmental degradation;

(g) Recommend that Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and major groups should give particular attention to the need to involve women in decision-making at all levels in sustainable development strategies, policies, projects and programmes;

(h) Suggest that in the guidelines for voluntary national reports to the Commission, appropriate consideration be given to population and gender concerns.

Notes

1/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), resolution 1, annex II.

2/ New York, Oxford University Press, 1987.

3/ See A/C.2/44/6, annex.

4/ The Challenge to the South: The Report of the South Commission (New York, Oxford University Press, 1990).

5/ See A/CONF.171/13 and Add.1.

6/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 1.5.

7/ See E/CONF.84/PC/14.

8/ See A/C.2/48/3.

9/ See E/CONF.84/PC/17.

10/ See A/CONF.171/PC/7/Add.1, paras. 42-45.

11/ See E/CONF.84/PC/16.

12/ See E/CONF.84/PC/13, annex II.

13/ See E/CONF.76/6, pp. 33-45.

14/ DP/1995/8, para. 15.